

ALASKA

today



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The
Bishop
officiates at
Eskimo
wedding



Sled brings
patient to
visit nurse



Eskimo drummers at Point Hope whaling feast

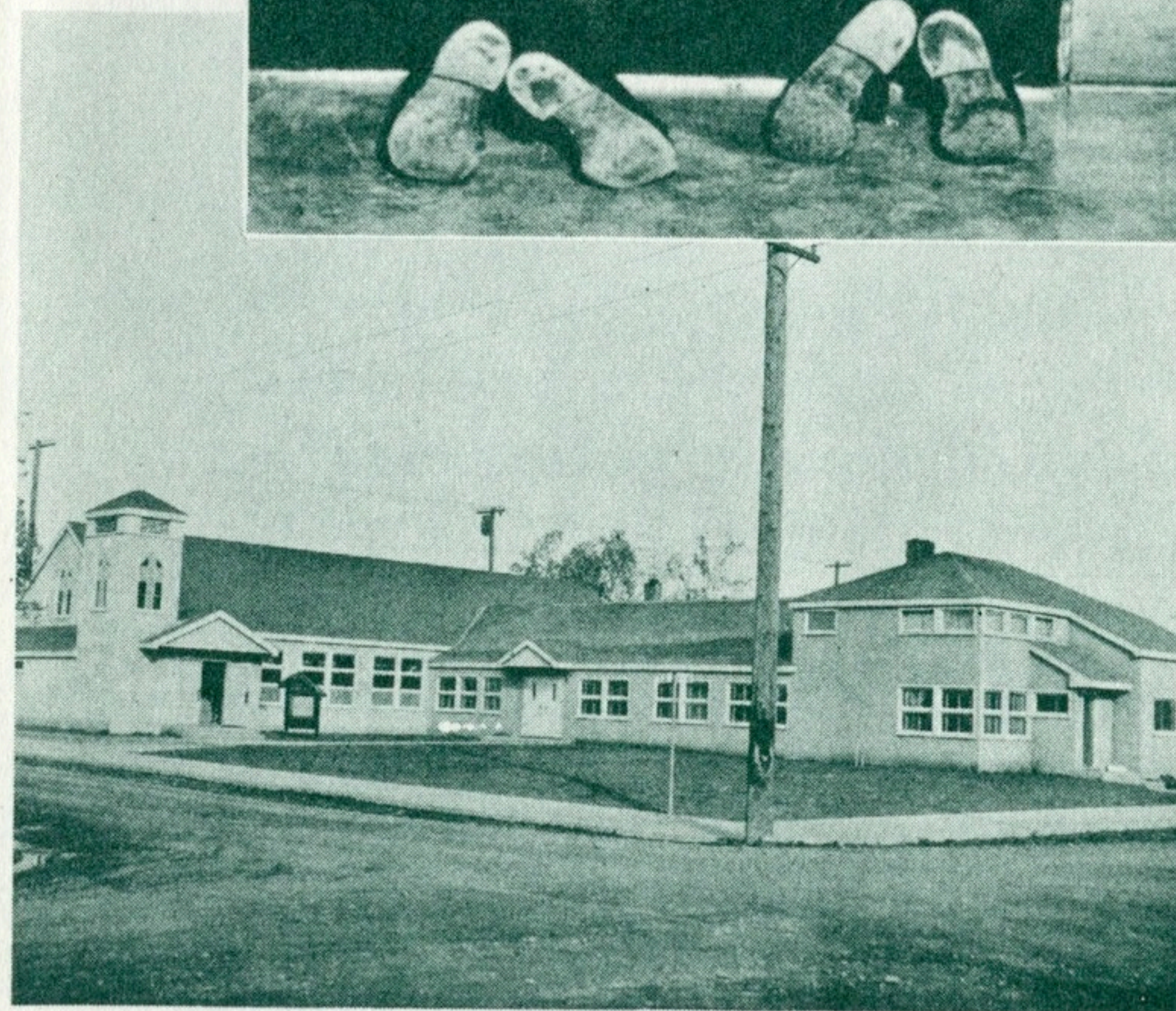
ALASKA TODAY HAS BEEN LIKENED TO A sleeping giant that has very definitely awakened and is beginning to flex his muscles. When the Territory was first purchased from Russia in 1867 it was simply a shadowy outpost of the Russian Empire, its inhabitants ministered to by seventeen clergy of the Russian Church. Five years earlier, however, missionaries of the Church of England had reached Fort Yukon and the seeds of the work of the American Church in Alaska were planted. It was not until 1887, twenty years after the United States acquired the land often slightly referred to as "Uncle Sam's Ice Box," that the first missionaries of the Episcopal Church journeyed up the Yukon River and established the first outpost at the Indian village of Anvik. A few years later with half the proceeds of the first United Thank Offering of the Women of the Church, a church building was erected. Christ Church, Anvik, today overlooks the Yukon, a truly living monument both to the beginnings of missionary work in Alaska and to the magnificent missionary giving of the women of the Church.

The great era of the Gold Rush at the turn of the century marked the real beginning of the coming of the white man to Alaska. From that time on the white population began to

outnumber the Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts until today there are four times as many whites as natives in a population of about 150,000 people.

The Church is Firmly Planted

AFTER the great gold discoveries, the life of the Territory remained largely dormant until the beginning of World War II. During this time fishing supplanted mining as the chief industry of the Territory. The work of the Episcopal Church was strengthened and firmly established. Built on the firm foundations of the magnificent ministry of the first bishop, the Rt. Rev. Peter Trimble Rowe, who served the Territory as bishop for nearly forty-seven years, and of his co-workers, missions, hospitals, and schools were started all over the 586,000 square miles of Alaska from Ketchikan on the Southeastern Coast to Point Hope almost two thousand miles north along the barren shores of the Arctic Ocean. From this foundation has developed the present strength of the Missionary District of Alaska of twenty missions, twenty-seven outstations, the twenty-six-bed Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital at Fort Yukon, and St. Mark's Boarding School for twenty-five children at Nenana. This work is staffed by eighteen priests, an Indian deacon, six nurses, six other women



The
Bishop
confirms at
Army Post

New \$300,000 All Saints' Church at Anchorage

workers, and several native lay readers and helpers, ministering to more than six thousand Episcopalians. One very challenging feature of this ministry is the fact that in more than twenty of these missions and outstations every soul in the village is an Episcopalian and here the Church truly ministers to an entire community in body, mind, and spirit.

The Sleeping Giant Wakens

THE sleeping giant that is Alaska truly began to awake in 1940 and in the decade since then the coming of the military and other allied services has revolutionized the life of Alaska. Cities have developed from sleepy towns and now Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Ketchikan are similar to bustling cities anywhere, both in mode of life and in modern conveniences. Vast construction projects have attracted thousands and now the new Alaska outnumbers and overshadows the old. The challenge to the Church is tremendously increased with the coming of the permanent bases and service men and their families and dependents. Self-supporting parishes are replacing some previously struggling missions. And more missions will follow this example. Alaska stands on the threshold of a great pulpwood industry just being born in the

midst of the wonderfully wooded hills of Southeastern Alaska.

The ministry of the Church is still the same: to all people wherever they are. The Bishop flies more than thirty thousand miles yearly in his little plane, the Blue Box, visiting his scattered flock of Indians in log cabin villages in the Interior; Eskimos in the sod igloos of the Arctic Coast, and increasing numbers of whites in the Interior and along the Southeast Coast.

Countless opportunities are there. There are thirteen villages where every person is an Episcopalian, that depend on their ministry for occasional visits of a priest who has several such stations under his care. New opportunities are everywhere and Alaska today awaits the coming of men and material support to meet the opportunities that God has given us here. As the Territory of Alaska grows materially great, it also must grow spiritually great with the inward strength that can come only through Christ and His Church.

"I Feel Plenty Good"

NOT long ago Bishop Gordon flew to the native village of Eagle on the Canadian border of Alaska, visiting a mission that had not been manned for many months. There he

greeted an elderly Indian who had been converted from paganism by the Church and who had looked to its ministry for strength and spiritual power for nearly fifty years. The Bishop asked Little Paul how he was feeling. The old man looked up at his Bishop and smiled and said, "Long time I no feel good. Now you come, I feel plenty good."

Little Paul did not feel good simply because his Bishop was there. He felt good because the Church was there, the Church representing the gifts, the prayers, and the sacrifices of millions of men and women and boys and girls the world over so that countless Little Pauls might have the blessings of the Gospel of Christ and through Him feel good.



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